

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 228272

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SMI-01 CU-04 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL DOUALA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: AFO-A-KOM

1. STATUE IS NOW IN POSSESSION OF AFRICAN ART MUSEUM IN WASHINGTON. THERE WILL BE A PRESS CONFERENCE AT 3:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER AT THE MUSEUM. AT THAT TIME PUBLIC STATEMENT WILL BE MADE THAT THE STATUE IS TO BE RETURNED TO CAMEROON AFTER BRIEF PERIOD OF DISPLAY IN WASHINGTON. DONORS AND AMOUNTS OF THEIR DONATIONS FOR THE STATUE WILL BE MADE PUBLIC AND THE STATUE WILL GO ON DISPLAY.

2. THE STATUE WILL NOT BE FORMALLY RETURNED TO THE CAMEROONIAN EMBASSY UNTIL WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY OF NEXT WEEK. DURING MEETING NOV. 19, AMB. TCHOUGUI SAID HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO LEND THE STATUE TO THE MUSEUM ON HIS OWN AUTHORITY AND THEREFORE THE STATUE WILL NOT BE FORMALLY TURNED OVER TO THE EMBASSY UNTIL JUST PRIOR TO ITS RETURN. STATUE WILL BE RETURNED TO CAMEROON VIA THE PAN AM FLIGHT DEPARTING THE US ON DEC. 3, AS OF THIS TIME, WARREN ROBBINS AND ONE OTHER REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE AFRICAN ART MUSEUM, TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, ONE REPORTER FROM ESQUIRE, MR.

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PAGE 02 STATE 228272

LAWRENCE GUSSMAN (PRINCIPLE DONOR) AND AT LEAST ONE

REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE CAMEROONIAN EMBASSY WILL ACCOMPANY THE STATUE ON ITS RETURN.

3. DURING MEETING WITH TCHOUNGUI, GUSSMAN AND ROBBINS BOTH EMPHASIZED THE INTEREST OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN IN SEEING THE STATUE RETURNED TO THE KOM PEOPLE. THEY EMPHASIZED THERE HAD BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF PUBLICITY ABOUT THE STATUE, AND SINCE THERE WILL BE REPORTERS ACCOMPANYING THE STATUE BACK TO CAMEROON. IT WOULD BE IN EVERYONE'S BEST INTEREST TO RETURN THE STATUE TO KOM RATHER THAN A MUSEUM OR OTHER DESTINATION. AMB. TCHOUNGUI STATED THAT WHILE THE STATUE WAS THE PROPERTY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CAMEROON AND THEY HAD THE SOLE AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE ITS DISPOSITION, HE FELT THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE US REPS TO ACCOMPANY THE STATUE BACK TO KINGDOM KOM.

4. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, EMBASSY MAY WISH TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS TO DETERMINE GURC INTENTIONS. KISSINGER

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